

NATIONAL COSTUMES OF UKRAINE



A costume for the dance "Chumak". A maiden from Bukovina. A festive costume from Poltava.

A national costume reflects not only the people's taste but also those influences which have produced it. Ukraine, like all countries of Europe, consists of many regions and this must be remembered when considering the national costume. Basically the apparel is similar throughout, however dividing the country into seven different areas gives us some distinctive differences.

Polissya, a northern province of low marshy plains is similar to our Florida everglades except for the heat. Some

Before she does this, the young girl, by the precise

direction of the elder starost, makes three profound bows before her parents and sincerely thanks them for "the bread they have fed her and the teachings they have imparted to her." Her father places his hands on her head as she kneels and bestows a blessing upon her, untying her from the obligations she had to him. With this she begins to weep sadly for this is the last time she will be able to embrace her parents' knees for help. From now until her wedding day she will cry during all the ceremonies. But these are tears both of sadness and of anxiety.

She then solemnly carries the long towels on a wooden plate and presents them to the match-makers. They each take one and tie it across one another's breast. They flatter her upon the adeptness and beauty of her sewing. She then turns to her betrothed and affectionately gives him a beautifully hand-painted kerchief. This he carefully ties around his belt. The symbol is much like that of an engagement ring, but, even more, it is a symbol of the girl submitting her virginity to him and recognizing his supreme authority over her. The starost's bond of match-making is considered almost as strong as that of a priest. Once this bond is made only death or some close reason may break the bond.

The match-makers then sit down and bring forth the whiskey concealed beneath their furs. As they and the father exchange sips of the beverage, they discuss the dowry to be given by the girl's parents. The starosti stall for time, hoping that in his lightheadedness, the father will grant something extra. When they have come to a decision, the girl invites the noble starosti to the wedding and they sit down to a supper of the best traditional foods. Late at night the starosti are seen by the villagers walking in triumph with their canes raised high, singing of the coming marriage.

Courtesy "Keryx"

of the best European flax is grown here and the hand woven linen is as fine as silk. White is the dominating color in the costumes of this section used with designs of red and black thread. Richly colored stripes trim women's blouse sleeves, hems of their skirts and aprons. In the winter, white wool trousers and warm skirts are typical, with felt coats and leather jackets worn for protection.

Volhyn, a section between East and West Ukraine has a very fertile soil explaining the fact that the inhabitants are wealthier than those of the rest of Ukraine. Their costumes take on an elongated silhouette with full-length leather coats covering the entire body, short sleeveless cloth jackets for men and linen jackets for women. Head coverings in the summer for men are broad-brimmed straw hats; in winter, lambskin caps. Women wear a scarf over a tight-fitting white cap.

The Dnieper region called the cradle of the race includes the territory around Kiev, Poltava and Chernihiv. Here is found a level plain of fertile black earth and a great deal of raw materials making conditions good for life. The Poltava costume is the one used by most Ukrainian-Americans for stage appearances. Basic features marking this costume for men are: shirts tucked in wide steepe trousers, suitable for horseback-riding, worn with a coat of fine cloth beautifully decorated with harmonizing colors and a cap with colored lining. A skirt and apron of thin wool, a sleeveless jacket of velvet trimmed with rich-rack, a blouse of white linen embroidered in red and black, and a wreath of flowers for a headdress highlights the woman's costume.

The province of Bukovina is found at the foot of the Carpathian mountains. In this section weaving, leather work and many-colored head coverings have developed. The silhouette is best described as long, even, severe and restrained. This region has the most elaborately woven kerchiefs, richly decorated belts and "painted" leather jackets with ornaments mainly in gold and silver. As they do everywhere in the Carpathians, the men wear their shirts outside their trousers, here they are longer, falling to the knee. No part of Ukraine has equaled the rich embroidery found on the shirts in this area. One of the women's oldest attire is a woolen wrapskirt of a dark color with vari-colored stripes at either end. Head coverings are of an ancient feature, women wear severely-wrapped white linen kerchief and the unmarried girls wear gay kerchiefs and elaborate wreaths of flowers. Young men's hats are adorned with colored streamers.

The Hutzul area is in the western part of the Car-



A festive costume from Kiev. Hutzul mountaineers in their holiday best.

pathians. People live high in the mountains, hunting, wood-cutting and pasturing flocks. Their dress is mainly of wool because of the cold mountain climate. Weaving is heavy and the costume short and squat looking. The women wear the two-part skirt with a belt, cloth stockings in bast shoes, metal necklaces of tiny crosses, leather pouches and the oldest form of Hutzul ritual garment, a wedding cloak of white wool. Sleeveless fur jackets and woven skirts sparkling with gold are typical of the high degree of ornamentation found in the Hutzul costume.

The Boyko province covers the central part of the Carpathians where the people work hard to make a living since their land is not fertile. The linen in this area is famous for its sheen and is often of a printed design with stripes of luxurious flowers, branches or figures. Small pleats are made in the women's skirts while the cloth is damp and bound with a cord to dry. The sleeveless jacket is of dark wool, edged with a red and white cord. A gray coat trimmed in modest cord reaching to the knees is made of wool and a leather knee length coat is used in the winter. For a head covering the women wear a white scarf which does not cover the ears with a knot lying high on the nape of the neck. The costumes are generally simple with small flower motifs on the shirts. Remnants of the ancient costume have survived, like the shirt with obliquely-cut sleeves with a side opening. Their metallic jewelry, crosses and earrings are based on the patterns of the princely period.

The Lemko section is found at the eastern end of the Carpathian arc. To the left and right of them live people of different nationalities, producing a marked difference in the costumes from other Ukrainian groups. Dark blue sleeveless jackets, woolen trousers with colored applied patterns and straw hats with a tassel are worn by the male. Deeply pleated skirts and elaborate necklaces are worn by the women. The headdress for the married women takes on a winged form of a colored kerchief. A man's coat is a simple cloak of homespun woolen cloth with a broad turned-down collar and has sewn-up sleeves, which serve as pouches and is used as a cape in stormy weather.

NEW OFFICERS FOR S.D. DANCERS

The San Diego folk dancers elected new officers to "guide" them during the next year. They are: Gordon Engler - President, Ed Coleman - Vice President, Don Shadley - Treasurer, Rita Farrell - Secretary.

THE UKRAINIAN YOUTH LEAGUE

The most representative organization of Ukrainian youth on the North American continent today is the Ukrainian Youth League of North America which is composed of hundreds of member clubs throughout the USA and Canada. Organized at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933, the Ukrainian Youth League has steadily grown since its founding and as a spontaneous result, its program of activities in the educational, cultural, sports, social, political and organizational fields of endeavor have also expanded many fold.

The Ukrainian Youth League is composed of American and Canadian youth of Ukrainian extraction. They are the children, grandchildren and in some cases great-grandchildren of immigrants from Kiev, Eastern Galicia, Kharkiv, Bukovina, Poltava, Lviv, Kuban, the Carpathians, Lemko-land and other Ukrainian districts. A high percentage of Uylers are college graduates—doctors, engineers, teachers, professors, lawyers, accountants, etc.—many are still students representing practically every institution of higher learning from West Point to McGill and many more are skilled laborers, in the trades, etc. By religion the UYL's membership is 65% Eastern Catholics and 35% Orthodox, however herein lies the Ukrainian Youth League's strength. Brotherhood and essentially Ukrainian Brotherhood has been the UYL's foundation these past 21 years and the results have been wonderful.

A review of the League's activities since our last national convention held Labor Day Weekend in Newark, New Jersey will enable the readers of VILTIS to understand our organization and its following to a great degree.

CULTURE—The UYL-NA recently published a book entitled "Ukrainian Arts" complete with the history of Ukraine and its contributions to the world of art. The first printing (2,000 copies) has already been completely exhausted as the demand from over the globe is continually mounting. Ukrainian Eastern Eggs, Music, Literature, Ceramics, Wood Carving, Folk Dress, Architecture, Embroidery and Kilim are all extensively covered. The second printing of this book (5,000 copies) will soon be off the presses . . . The UYL is also readying for publication a book complete with colored pictures entitled "Ukraine Dances". This will enable all lovers of folk dancing to master our many beautiful Ukrainian dances in a relatively short time . . . Also, our member groups in the New York - New Jersey area have combined to form a chorus of 100 voices heard in May in New York City's famous Carnegie Hall, the occasion being the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Ukrainian National Association in America, the largest Ukrainian fraternal organization in North America boasting 75,000 members.

SPORTS—In an effort to develop more Bronko Nagurski's from amongst the Ukrainians, the UYL-NA sponsors tournaments in basketball, bowling, golf, tennis, soft ball and swimming. This year, the UYL's basketball-bowling tourney will be held in Auburn, New York and the other sports will be played off in Cleveland, Ohio during the summer months. Former participants in the UYL's sports program have been All-American basketball player Bob Zawoluk, professional basketball player, Lee Knorek, professional football star Steve Romanik of the Chicago Cardinals and professional golfer, Mike Homa. The UYL-NA also presents the "Outstanding College Football Player of Ukrainian Descent" award annually and this year Chet Hanulak of the University of Maryland and Cadet Bob Mischak of West Point were the recipients of the coveted award. At the testimonial dinner held in their honor, the following Ukrainian-American celebrities attended: movie actor John Hodiak, now appearing on Broadway in "Cain Mutiny Courtmartial"; actor wrestler, Mike Mazurki,